

By Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux

207th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - A new, 52,000 square-foot bottled water facility officially opened on Victory Base Complex next to “Z” Lake on May 2, when Brig. Gen. Donald Campbell Jr., Multi-National Corps-Iraq Chief of Staff cut the ribbon.

The facility was built by Al-Morrell Development and is operated by Oasis International Waters, Inc.

This is the second and the largest of six water bottling plants that are to be opened in theater, under a 3rd Corps Support Command contract, said Maj. Joe Bondy, the Operations OIC of the 18th Corps Support Command falling under the 4th Sustainment Brigade.

The construction started in November. The plant was commissioned in early April. Although the plant didn’t initially run at 100 percent capacity, they started shipping the water out on April 12, said Tom Edwards, site manager of Oasis International Waters.

At full capacity, the plant produces 450,000 one-liter bottles a day. It means 37,500 cases, 625 pallets of water. A 45-foot trailer, which is usually used to transport the water, holds 22 pallets. Producing the water locally versus shipping it in from Kuwait has several benefits.

“It is going to save lots of money and keep Soldiers off the road,” Bondy said. Keeping the number of trucks delivering water to different bases to a minimum “translates into lives,” said Alan Morrell, the company executive officer of Al-Morrell

Development. “That translates into sons and daughters, husbands and wives, mothers and daughters.”

Since the 4th SB and its subordinate units are responsible for combat service support in the Multi-National Division-Baghdad area, they will coordinate the amount of water to be produced and distributed, based on previous weeks’ statistics. Because of the high capacity of the plant, excess water can be pushed out to surrounding forward operating bases and even to Camp Taji, Bondy explained. Taji is approximately 15 miles away from the Baghdad International Airport, which can take up to 45 minutes to cover, depending on traffic and road conditions.

Producing one-liter bottles with no labels is a cost-saver. Each bottle has its ‘born on date’ inscribed with laser, and they all bear a small imprint of a palm tree, the trademark of Oasis International Waters.

“They made a good decision going to the one-liter bottle, because Soldiers will drink more water that way,” Bondy said. “It is more convenient. . . It is easier to drink a liter of water, [and] it is easier to carry the bottle around.”

The point of origin for the water is “Z” lake located on Victory Base Complex. By the time the water goes through a multi-step purification process, the final product is equivalent with any bottled water produced by well-known water companies.

“In fact, chemically there is no difference between this water and Aquafina,” said Kenneth Alferez, a General Electric water engineer who helped and supervised the setting up of the plant. The water is carefully tested along every step, as it makes its way from the lake to the bottle.

First the water is pumped into a storage bag from the lake and it is treated with chlorine to kill the bugs and other living organisms. The PH level is lowered to allow the chlorine work more effectively. Once that is done, the water goes through an ultra filtration unit which can filter out particles as small as 1 micron. Most viruses are the size of 2 microns, Alferez explained.

Afterwards the water goes into a third storage bag. From there it goes through a reverse osmosis (RO) process twice. RO is a form of hyper filtration. This type of filter is able to filter out most contaminants, except salts.

During the second RO, the water goes through a carbon filter, then through an ultraviolet (UV) filter. Lastly the water goes to a contact tank where it gets ozonated.

“It is three barriers of protection against any contaminant that might be in the water after it goes through the RO. The ozone is there to kill anything or everything,” Alferez explained.

The end result is the handy one-liter bottles, which participants of the ceremony got to taste and take some home with them. Soldiers in the MND-B area are already consuming the product of the plant.



Brig. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., Multi-National Corps-Iraq Chief of Staff and Tom Newell, Middle East general manager of Al-Morrell Development cut the ribbon on the new water bottling plant at Camp Liberty on May 2. The plant provides drinking water for the Multi-National Division-Baghdad area.



Brig. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., Multi-National Corps-Iraq Chief of Staff and Mr. Alan Morrell, the company executive officer of Al-Morrell Development cut the cake after the ribbon cutting of the water bottling plant at Camp Liberty, on May 2.



Maj. Paul Wynn, the commander of the 1011th Quartermaster Company tastes a bottle of water produced at the Camp Liberty water bottling plant at the opening ceremony on May 2.



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